

SCRIPTURE HELP

1 All are called to be fruitful. John 15:16; Matt. 5:16; Rev. 22:12; Titus 2:11.

The Father sends rain upon the just and upon the unjust (Matt. 5:45) The unfruitful vine drinks in as much of blessing as the fruitful one. The ungrateful person enjoys God's goodness and providence equally with the rest and has the same call to gratitude.

2 Causes of barrenness: Shallow soil, Mk. 4:16, 17; cares of this life, Mk. 4:18, 19.

Name other causes. They are plentiful.

3 Helps to fruitfulness: Accepting the word, Mk. 4:20; abiding in Christ, John 15:5; love, John 13:35; care, I Pet. 1:5-10.

Name other helps. What in your experience has helped you most.

SEED THOUGHTS FOR SHORT TALKS

1 God has given man the power to be fruitful and justly expects him to make the most of his possibilities. Gen 1:28.

2 The fruit is not the vine but the seed. The vine is necessary to the perpetuation of the vine. Even so the barren Christian dies. John 15:6.

3 Many vines like the one in the parable, are unfruitful because of lack of care. When they are digged about and pruned and fertilized they will be all right. Even so many Christians perish for lack of help and guidance from the stronger brethren. There is hope for the wayward. Help them.

4 There is the awful possibility of going too far. The conscience may be so seared that even evil will appear good and good evil. It is a fearful thing to grieve away the spirit. II Pet. 2:21, 22.

FOR ANSWER IN THE MEETING

1 How can a Christian "cumber the ground?"

2 What does it mean for a Christian to be fruitful?

3 How may we know whether we are "cumbering the ground" or not?

4 How should we treat those Christians who seem to be failures?

5 Why should we despair of no one?

6 When and how will we be punished for unfruitfulness?

7 How can our society help to make its members more fruitful?

C. F. YODER.

DOES EVERY LIFE LIFT OR HINDER? HOW?

ALICE HARLEY.

This was a query given at our Young People's Meeting last Sunday night. It impressed us with the responsibility of life.

Christ said, "A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things, and the evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things." Every moment of our lives we are shedding our influence, and often unconsciously, either for good or for evil.

There was in some part of our country at one time a rock, so plastic that drops of water and the feet of birds made an impression, but in the course of time, the elements of the air changed it into solid rock, but the impression remained, and so our associations we choose, the books we read, and the thoughts we indulge in, make impressions not only on our own souls, but also on the souls of others and on tablets of eternity. How great then is our responsibility.

In the account of the imprisonment of Paul and Silas at Philippi, the Revised version reads, "And the prisoners were listening" "At midnight Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God," little dreaming of any effect upon their unknown fellow prison-

ers, but they "were listening". And who knows the effect wrought in their listening souls by what they heard that night?

Oh, the prisoners that are "listening" still! Prisoners of sin and of bondage. What do they hear from us? Words or empty testimony is poor and worthless, if there is not a record back of that testimony, consistent with what we profess. The only power is love, the only key that unlocks the heart is charity.

The greatest lifter of lives is Christ Himself, who prompted by his love for the suffering world, died that He might raise men from the lowest depths of sin and misery to the highest heights of glory and happiness.

His great mission was to minister to the needy one. For Him, nothing was too hard. His love never spoke of sacrifice.

But He not only lifts our lives, but He places within them the power of drawing others to Him, that they too may be lifted up. The great aim of most professors of Christ is to imitate Him in His life and character, but the purpose of Christ is that men should receive Him and let Him be reproduced in them. God's great thought is not human imitation, but divine reproduction, not self, but Christ.

Oh! the power of a consecrated life. To sum up the results of such lives as Peter, Paul, Spurgeon, Moody, Judson and others, would be an impossible task.

The life of Adoniram Judson and those of the devoted saintly women who were the sharers of his toil and sacrifice in dark India have been a source of inspiration to thousands, and cause one's heart to thrill with noble impulse. His twenty-one months or imprisonment in the at Ava, and in the prison-pen of Oung-pen-la is a tale of endurance for Christ which makes use of the words *sacrifice* and *crossbearing* by us in these easy times almost an empty sound. But the result was, over seven thousand souls won for Christ. Oh, for yielded hearts, full of the Holy Ghost, yielded to a life of service like that of the Master.

A Word of Encouragement

Christian Advocate.

There are enough men who make it their business to discourage their neighbors. Church and State are full of critics. Statesmen, lawmakers, officers of the government, ministers of the Gospel, and workers in the vineyard of the Lord are followed by an army of self-constituted critics who feel called on to condemn everything that is done. The air is full of fault-finding; the sky is black with denunciation, and the world is full of discouraged souls.

Discouragement and happiness are incompatible. When hope and courage go out joy goes also. The depressed one hangs his harp on the willows, for how can he sing the Lord's song with a heavy heart? The most perilous time in one's life is when he is tempted to give up. His strength is gone with his hope. He cannot fight the battle of life. There is as much hope of a dead man

as of a hopeless man. If Satan can only take away our hope, he has us in his power, and can do with us almost as he will. Discouraged people lose confidence in God. They conclude that God has forgotten them, has not treated them justly, or that there is no God.

The Bible is the best book for discouraged souls in the world. One can find more encouragement here than in all other books put together. Here is encouragement for the weak. All are weak, but some are painfully conscious of a peculiar weakness. There is nothing they can do. They cannot preach nor pray nor sing nor write. They are neither poets nor orators nor painters nor statesmen nor scholars. They have no calling, no trade, no tact, no adaptation. They see no place where they can lay to a helping hand. What says the Bible to them? "God hath chosen the weak things of this world." Let the weak one remember that he belongs to the very class from which the Almighty makes His choice. The weak shall confound the mighty. "When I am weak, then am I strong."

There is encouragement for us in our ignorance. We know little. We do not know how to preserve our physical health. Most persons who are sick are ignorant of the way in which they were overtaken by disease. They did not know how to avoid the invisible germs which invaded the body. The wisest scientist does not know. The invisible microbe is more than a match for our science. If we are ignorant of earthly things, how much more are we ignorant of heavenly things? If we cannot protect ourselves against material enemies, how shall we protect ourselves against spiritual wickedness in high places? Are we not helpless and hopeless in an evil world? Nay; the Bible says, "If any of you lacketh wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." The soldier must not take pains to protect himself from the missiles of the foe. His business is to follow his leader; and if he shall fall, he shall be covered with glory, because he fell in the path of duty. We follow our Leader. He knows all dangers. He is our Keeper. If we fall while following Him, we fall in the way of duty, and all is well. "The steps of a good man are ordered of the Lord."

Burdened souls need comfort. The man who has a large family and a small income, the poor man who has no income, the afflicted who suffer pain, the aged who are laid aside, those who are wronged by their neighbors, all bear heavy burdens. Some are crushed to the earth. They have more than mortal can carry. Is there a word of encouragement for them? Here it is: "Cast thy burden on the Lord, and He will sustain thee." Jesus, who fell exhausted under the burden of His cross just outside the gate of Jerusalem, knows what it means to be overloaded. He hath borne our sorrows and carried our griefs. Moreover, burdens which are cast